

# Glens Falls City Park Conceptual Preservation and Improvement Plan

City of Glens Falls  
Warren County, New York

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Prepared by:  
The Chazen Companies  
100 Glen Street  
Glens Falls, NY 12801



Prepared for:

Glens Fall Business Improvement  
District

*Dutchess County*  
*(845) 454-3980*

*Orange County*  
*(845) 567-1133*

*Capital District*  
*(518) 273-0055*

*North Country*  
*(518) 812-0513*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Glens Falls Business Improvement District (BID) recognizes the value and importance of the City Park located between Maple, Ridge, Bay and Glen Streets and adjacent to Crandall Library. The park is a focal point of downtown activities and a major community amenity, serving as a meeting place, a location of downtown festivals, and a place for a picnic lunch and relaxation.

The Glens Falls BID requested an evaluation of the park and recommendations for improving the visual appearance of the park commensurate with its importance in Glens Falls and to improve the functionality of the park during festivals and everyday use. This report presents the finding and recommendations of this effort. Included with this report are two drawings: Glens Falls City Park Existing Conditions and Observations and Glens Falls City Park Conceptual Preservation and Improvement Plan.

## THE PARK ENVIRONMENT

Glens Falls City Park is comprised of two parcels of land. One parcel is owned by the City of Glens Falls and is adjacent to City Hall. The second parcel is owned by the Crandall Trust and is to the north and east of the Crandall Library. The observations and recommendations in this report focus on both parcels of land and will be referred to as “City Park” or “the park”.

City Park covers approximately two acres of land within an urban setting providing visual relief to the buildings, asphalt and concrete of downtown Glens Falls. The park property is level with a mixture of deciduous trees and lawn area. On a daily basis, the park is primarily used by local people working or living in downtown Glens Falls as a place to have a picnic lunch or meet with friends. Pedestrian traffic is high as the park provides pedestrian access to downtown, City Hall, and Crandall Library.

Several times a year, the city allows craft fairs sponsored by the Lower Adirondack Regional Arts Council (LARAC), and other events in the park which attract large crowds. These events typically involve tents being erected and create a need for electrical power throughout the park.

A bandstand is situated in the middle of the park within a lawn area. In the summer, programs are offered in the bandstand including musical concerts. Major users of the bandstand include the Crandall Library and LARAC.

There is a flagpole, a Veteran’s Memorial and four small memorials/plaques spread throughout the park. A kiosk with a map of downtown Glens Falls and flyers for public events sits on a brick plaza near Lapham Place. The information placed in the kiosk is managed by LARAC.

Improvements to the road and sidewalk along Glen Street are currently being done by the City of Glens Falls. A new sidewalk is planned as well as street trees and a circular brick plaza and kiosk at the corner of Bay and Maple Streets. These are welcome improvements and will help set the tone for future improvements throughout the park.

There are also plans to expand the Crandall Library towards Glen Street. Sidewalks around the library will be given special treatment making them more attractive and providing a more fitting setting for the Library.

## OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### LANDSCAPE

The landscape of the park is a relatively flat lawn with many mature trees generally placed on the periphery of the lawn areas. There are a few flower beds at the corners of the park and at the Veterans' Memorial.

**Trees:** The trees in City Park are a primary feature of the park. They provide shade and bring life to the city. Considering how long it takes to grow a mature tree, it's important to maintain them in the best condition possible.

#### *Observations:*

- Bare soil and surface roots under densely shaded trees, especially the Norway Maple trees, is unattractive and creates a large muddy area in wet weather. Mature Norway Maples emit toxins in the soil that prevent grass growth and therefore are not an appropriate tree species for City Park.
- All newly planted trees have moderate to severe trunk damage caused by mowers, trimmers, and passersby endangering the appearance, health and life span of these trees. Young trees are important to the park's future tree canopy.
- The crab apple trees along Ridge Street are approaching their effective life and are declining. Historical pruning activities have created oddly shaped trees.
- At least one tree (Ash tree along Lapham Place) is diseased and should be removed and replaced. Other trees show sign of possible disease and should be checked periodically.
- Trees are generally placed along the periphery of the lawn area creating a sunnier open lawn in the middle of the park. However, there are a number of trees placed along the sidewalk that traverses the central portion of the park creating large shaded areas – negatively impacting the lawn. These trees also divide the park into two separate areas rather than allowing for a large open lawn in the middle of the park.
- In front of the library, large trees are closely spaced along the sidewalks and in the interior lawn area creating too dense a shade for grass to grow. There are several Norway Maple trees here that add to the problem of poor grass growth.

#### *Recommendations:*

- Remove the Norway Maple trees. Create a long term plan for tree replacement that includes a list of acceptable species less susceptible to surface roots and a dense canopy.
- Replace young trees that have trunk damage. Install tree guards on newly planted trees. Install a bed of mulch under the trees to keep mowers and other harmful maintenance activities at a distance. Water newly planted trees regularly for at least three years after planting.

- Consider removing the crab apple trees and replace them with flowering trees to match the new trees being installed along Glen Street. Alternatively, hire a pruning specialist to selectively prune and renovate the remaining trees.
- Remove and replace the diseased Ash tree and Zelkova.
- To create a more open central lawn area, remove the Shagbark Hickory tree, Crimson Norway Maple tree, Honeylocust and small crab apple tree along the sidewalk transversing the central portion of the park.
- Prune all trees to create a higher canopy, improve sun penetration to the lawn and to remove diseased and ill-placed branches.
- Consider ground cover or mulch under densely shaded trees.

**Lawn:** The lawn is a primary feature of the park, is highly visible and functional and needs to be kept in top condition.

*Observations:*

- The lawn is an unattractive patchwork of grass, weeds, bare soil, dips, bumps, etc.

*Recommendations:*

- Remove existing lawn including the strip of lawn along Ridge and Maple Streets. Add topsoil to level the lawn and re-seed with a sun/shade seed mix that will stand up to hard use.
- Install an irrigation system to maintain the lawn in top condition.
- Because the lawn is used for seating and play, use an organic fertilizer regularly and hand weed as necessary.

**Gardens:** Gardens add color and visual interest to the park as well as attract butterflies, birds and people.

*Observations:*

- Soil from the existing flower beds spills onto the sidewalks creating an unkempt appearance and adding to maintenance needs. The flower beds also show signs of foot and bike traffic adding to the unkempt appearance.
- Some of the flower beds are planted exclusively with annual flowers, leaving unattractive bare soil in the winter and spring.
- The area around the bandstand is bare mulch with no vegetation to integrate it with the park.

*Recommendations:*

- Create raised flower beds with concrete curbs—or other materials—at the corners of the park. Mulch the beds to retain moisture and soil.
- Add low maintenance shrubs, perennials and ornamental grasses to the flower beds to create four seasons of interest.
- To enhance the bandstand and integrate it with the park, create a formal garden around the bandstand using low maintenance shrubs, ornamental grasses and perennials. Integrate benches, lighting and trash receptacles to create a pleasing and relaxing environment.
- Add flower beds in front of the library to enhance the recommended additional seating areas there.

## HARDSCAPE AND STRUCTURES

### **Bandstand**

#### *Observations:*

- The opening to the bandstand is oriented to the south towards the Crandall Trust property. This is a smaller space than the City Park property to the north.
- The bandstand sits alone in the middle of the park with no vegetation or walkway connections with other park features.
- The wood on some areas of the bandstand needs repair/replacement.

#### *Recommendations:*

- Add a staircase on the north side of the bandstand to match the existing stairs on the south side. This will allow activity on the bandstand to be oriented in either direction.
- Create a garden around the perimeter of the bandstand to highlight the bandstand as a central feature and integrate it with the park. Include seating, lighting and low maintenance shrubs, ornamental grasses and perennials to achieve this effect.
- Repair and maintain the wooden structure of the bandstand. Keep shrubs at least three feet away from the wooden structure so it dries more quickly in wet weather.

### **Sidewalks**

#### *Observations:*

- The intersection of walkways where the cross walk enters the park on Maple Street is a primary entrance to the park both visually and functionally. Small flower beds help to define the importance of this area but spill soil onto the concrete and are subject to foot and bike traffic. The paving surface in the area of the crosswalk has been patched several times and is an unattractive and unsafe mixture of asphalt and concrete surfaces. This is also the handicap access to the park and library and should have a smoother unbroken surface. A food vendor also uses this space in warmer weather.
- Cracked and crumbling sidewalks throughout the park create trip hazards and are unsightly.
- The metal curb along Lapham Place is broken and dangerous in areas. The sidewalk is also crumbling.
- The concrete curb between the sidewalk and the lawn area along Ridge Street creates a neat defined edge to the park. This is the only park sidewalk that has this curb treatment.
- At the corners of the sidewalk on Lapham Place and Ridge Street and Maple Street and Ridge Street, where the sidewalks meet the road, there is a triangle of lawn. This area is mostly bare soil and is a difficult place to grow grass because of snow and ice melting salts as well as pedestrian traffic.
- The concrete strip along Maple Street is crumbling and patched and is only two feet wide. The metal curb is cracked and sharp in some areas creating a danger to pedestrians who use this strip of concrete when they park along Maple Street.

- The concrete pad in the strip of lawn across from the Queensbury Hotel is sunken below the adjacent sidewalk and creates a trip hazard. There is no crosswalk that crosses Maple Street in this area so this pad of concrete isn't necessary.

*Recommendations:*

- Create a gateway entrance plaza to the park where the Maple Street crosswalk enters the park. Make the plaza large enough to provide space for handicap access, food vendors and pedestrian use. Use brick paving to match the brick in the existing kiosk plaza. Create raised flower beds to help define the entrance.
- Repair the sidewalks where necessary because of broken concrete.
- Replace sidewalk along Lapham Place with a new concrete sidewalk and integral concrete curb.
- Consider installing this concrete curb edge between the sidewalks and lawn along Lapham Place and Maple Street integrating it with the raised flower beds at the corners of the park.
- Replace the lawn area with concrete pavement and a dropped curb throughout the radius of the sidewalk. Ramp the concrete for accessibility.
- Remove the concrete strip along Maple Street and replace with a three foot wide concrete sidewalk with an integral concrete curb.
- Remove the concrete pad in the strip of lawn across from the Queensbury Hotel.
- Install a sidewalk connecting the recommended circular plaza in front of the library with the parking along Maple Street.

## **Lighting**

*Observations:*

- Lighting appears to be adequate on the periphery of the park but inadequate in the interior along pedestrian walkways.
- The lampposts on the Crandall Trust property are different from the decorative lampposts now being used throughout the City of Glens Falls and other areas of the park.

*Recommendations:*

- Install bollard lights along pedestrian walkways and seating areas.
- Replace the lampposts on the Crandall Trust property with the new city standard.

## **Signage**

*Observations:*

- There are no signs to indicate the park is "City Park"

*Recommendations:*

- Install a spotlighted decorative sign to indicate "City Park"

## **Electrical Outlets**

*Observations:*

- Electricity is needed during concerts and fairs and other events in the park. A few electrical outlets are located at the bandstand. During large events, electrical cables are run throughout the park creating a trip hazard.

*Recommendations:*

- Install electrical outlets integral with the bollard lights and lampposts at various locations throughout the park.

### **Memorials, Commemorative Plaques and Flagpole**

*Observations:*

- Separate small memorials and commemorative plaques spread throughout the park have little impact and create separate maintenance locations.
- The Veterans' Memorial has little visual impact. The flagpole could have a stronger relationship with the Veterans' Memorial

*Recommendations:*

- Move the "Spirit of Glens Falls" plaque and the memorial bench to the proposed bandstand garden.
- Create a setting with more visual impact for the Veterans' Memorial and flagpole.
- Create a plan for future memorials to be placed as part of a flower bed, garden or seating area rather than stand alone.

### **Benches/Seating**

*Observations:*

- The green wooden benches spread in the park are flimsy and unattractive. They also create a maintenance problem.
- There are no designated seating areas in the park.

*Recommendations:*

- Create and permanently install attractive seating areas at appropriate places throughout park.
- Eliminate the green wooden benches from the park.

### **Picnic Tables**

*Observations:*

- Picnic tables are placed in dense shade on bare soil. As people use the tables this causes further compaction of soil on the roots of the trees and inhibits the growth of grass. The current style of the tables is more appropriate to a natural area than a city park. If benches were provided, they would be adequate for people eating light meals in the park.

*Recommendations:*

- Remove the picnic tables from City Park.

### **Trash Receptacles**

*Observations:*

- As areas of the park become more defined and develop, such as seating areas, more trash receptacles will be needed.

*Recommendations:*

- Install additional trash receptacles in the park as appropriate areas are developed.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND ESTIMATED COSTS:

<p><b>Trees:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove 2 Crimson Norway Maple, Shagbark Hickory, diseased Ash tree, diseased Zelkova, 3 Norway Maple</li> <li>• Replace removed Ash tree with American Elm and Zelkova with Ginko and plant additional new trees</li> <li>• Prune all trees to create a higher tree canopy, lighter shade and to eliminate diseased or ill-placed branches</li> <li>• Replace the crab apple trees along Maple Street with flowering pear trees or other flowering trees</li> <li>• Replace young trees that have damaged trunks and install tree guards on all newly planted trees</li> <li>• Water newly planted trees for three years</li> <li>• Create a long term plan for tree replacement</li> </ul>	<p>\$2,000.00</p> <p>\$1,450.00</p> <p>\$3,000.00</p> <p>\$8,000.00</p> <p>\$6,000.00</p>
<p><b>Lawn:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regrade the lawn and tree lawn areas to create a level surface</li> <li>• Install an irrigation system to provide adequate water for the lawn</li> <li>• Reseed using a sun/shade seed mix with strong wear tolerance</li> <li>• Regularly fertilize with phosphorus free organic fertilizer</li> <li>• Control weeds by removing them by hand and use corn gluten to prevent reseeding</li> </ul>	<p>\$20,000.00</p> <p>\$60,000.00</p> <p>\$9,000.00</p>
<p><b>Gardens:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create well defined raised beds for the flower beds at the corner of Ridge and Lapham and Ridge and Maple streets</li> <li>• Create a garden around the bandstand of low maintenance shrubs, ornamental grasses and perennials</li> <li>• Create gardens around the seating plazas at the library</li> </ul>	<p>\$3,000.00</p> <p>\$8,000.00</p> <p>\$8,000.00</p>
<p><b>Bandstand:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add stairs to the east side of the bandstand directly opposite from the existing stairs</li> <li>• Repair portions of the structure in need of repair</li> </ul>	<p>\$4,000.00</p> <p>\$3,500.00</p>
<p><b>Sidewalks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace the side walk along Lapham Place east of the brick plaza.</li> <li>• At the corners of Ridge and Lapham and Ridge and Maple streets, replace the lawn areas with a dropped curb, handicap accessible concrete pad</li> <li>• Remove and replace the concrete strip along Maple St. widening it to 3 feet</li> <li>• Remove the concrete pad in the tree lawn across from the Queensbury Hotel and replace with lawn</li> <li>• Remove the concrete sidewalk along Maple St. where the crosswalk enters the park and replace it with a brick plaza.</li> </ul>	<p>\$12,500.00</p> <p>\$5,000.00</p> <p>\$28,500.00</p> <p>\$200.00</p> <p>\$20,500.00</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add a concrete curb on the park side of the sidewalks along Maple St and Lapham Place to match the one along the sidewalk on Ridge St. Integrate this with the raised flower beds at the corners.</li> <li>• Install a sidewalk connecting the circular plaza in front of the library with the parking along Maple Street.</li> </ul>	\$11,250.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add bollard lighting in the interior of the park along sidewalks</li> </ul>	\$5,000.00
<p><b>Lighting:</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add decorative signage to indicate “City Park”</li> </ul>	\$40,000.00
<p><b>Signage and Information:</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add electrical outlets as needed throughout the park for use during fairs, concerts, etc.</li> </ul>	\$6,000.00
<p><b>Electrical Outlets:</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a setting with more visual impact for the veteran’s memorial and flagpole.</li> <li>• Move the “Spirit of Glens Falls” plaque to the garden around the bandstand</li> <li>• Create a plan for future memorials to be incorporated into the bandstand garden</li> </ul>	\$12,000.00
<p><b>Memorials:</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate the wooden green benches</li> <li>• Install several brick plaza seating areas with benches throughout the park</li> </ul>	\$5,000.00
<p><b>Brick Plazas with Benches</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove the picnic tables from the park</li> </ul>	\$100.00
<p><b>Picnic Tables:</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install several new trash receptacles at key locations throughout the park to match the existing</li> </ul>	\$55,000.00
<p><b>Trash Receptacles:</b></p>	
<p><b>Professional Fees to Accomplish Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant writing</li> <li>• Survey</li> <li>• Design development and construction drawings</li> <li>• Construction Administration</li> </ul>	\$6,000.00
<p><b>Total Estimated Costs</b></p>	\$5,000.00
<p><b>10% Contingency</b></p>	\$5,000.00
<p><b>Grand Total</b></p>	\$32,000.00
	\$6,000.00
	\$391,000.00
	\$39,100.00
	<b>\$430,100.00</b>